



County of San Diego
Department of Environmental Health
Food & Housing Division



GETTING THE FACTS ON *TRANS* FAT

What is *trans* fat?

- A type of fat formed when liquid oils are made into solid fats (shortening and hard margarine)
- A small amount is found naturally in some animal-based foods
- Trans fats are made when hydrogen is added to vegetable oil (hydrogenation process) to increase shelf life and flavor stability of foods

What are problems associated with *trans* fat?

- They raise low-density lipoprotein (LDL or bad) cholesterol that cause coronary heart disease (CHD) leading to heart attacks and stroke
- 12.5 million Americans suffer from CHD and more than 500,000 die each year
- Estimated number of premature, preventable deaths each year attributed to the consumption of artificial *trans* fats is on the order of 30,000 to 100,000

What foods contain *trans* fat?

- They are often found in processed foods made with partially hydrogenated vegetable oils like shortening, harder margarines, crackers, candies, cookies, snack foods, fried foods, and baked goods

What are the labeling requirements on food items?

- As of January 1, 2006, food manufacturers must list *trans* fat on the nutrition label
- The FDA requires the amount of *trans* fat in a serving to be listed on a separate line under saturated fat on the Nutrition Facts panel
- Manufacturers may list *trans* fat with less than 0.5 grams as 0 (zero)
- *Trans* fat will be listed only in gram amounts since daily values have not been established



Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)	
Servings Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 1.5g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 5g	

Are all fats bad for me?

- Fat is a major source of energy for the body and aids in the absorption of vitamins A, D, E, and K and carotenoids
- It is important for growth, development, and maintenance of good health
- Fat provides taste, consistency, and stability

What actions can I take to lower my *trans* fat intake?

- Choose foods with lower saturated fat, *trans* fat, and cholesterol (check the nutrition facts)
- Replace saturated and *trans* fat with monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fats. These do not increase LDL and may provide some health benefits when eaten in moderation.
- Consider the use of vegetable oils (except coconut and palm kernel) and soft margarines (liquid, tub, or spray)
- Eat foods like fish that are lower in saturated fat instead of meat
- Limit foods high in cholesterol (liver, organ meats, egg yolks, full-fat dairy products)
- Choose foods low in saturated fat (1% dairy products, lean meats, fish, skinless poultry, whole grain foods, fruits, and vegetables)

Where can I get further information?

(Just type *trans* fat in the search box on the listed web site)

- www.cfsan.fda.gov
- www.americanheart.org
- www.diabetes.org

Educated consumers can make educated choices.